

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

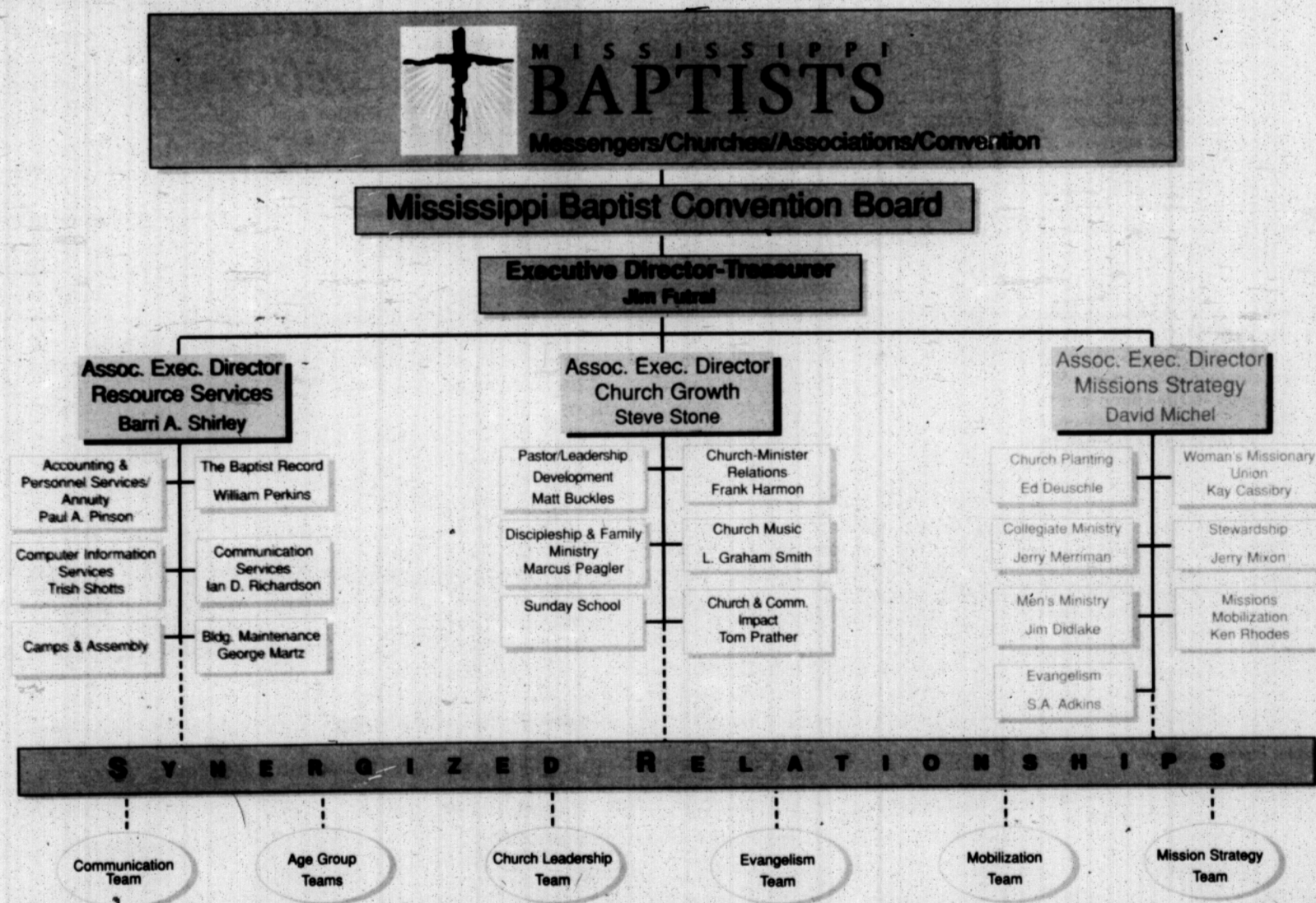
By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

- Resource Services, formerly known as Business Services. Barri A. Shirley, associate executive director.

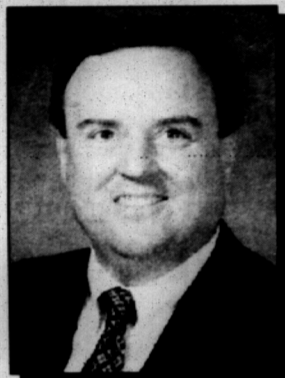
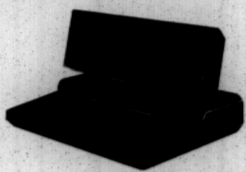
Church Growth will also be the home for a new department

Missions Mobilization, formerly known as the

The new organization was affirmed by the MBCB executive committee, after a briefing by Futral at their last meeting at the Baptist Building in Jackson. For more information on the new organization, contact the MBCB executive director's office at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3201 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 201. E-mail: bbox@mbcb.org



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The value of The Baptist Record

In the early days of the Republic, Thomas Jefferson is reputed to have addressed the issue of a free press by opining that if he had to choose between government without newspapers or newspapers without government, he "would not hesitate to choose the latter."

Since our humble beginnings in the 19th century, Southern Baptists have taken seriously the role of Baptist newspapering as a ministry of information — distributors of important news as well as repositories of our history.

J.B. Gambrell was one of those early believers in the power of information as a support for ministry. A preacher and Civil War veteran, he served as president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and is counted as one of the founders of Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth — currently the largest non-Catholic seminary in the world.

Gambrell founded The Baptist Record newspaper in Mississippi in 1877 and served as editor until 1891. Then he went to Texas and founded the Baptist Standard newspaper in 1888. Today, the Standard ranks as the largest circulation newspaper in the SBC and the Record ranks as the third largest.

Along with The Alabama Baptist, the Standard and the Record are the only state Baptist newspapers remaining with weekly circulation of over 100,000.

For the benefit of those who aren't in the business, suffice to say that 100,000 subscribers is a huge circulation base for any newspaper — secular or otherwise.

Like most publications, The Baptist Record has had good times and lean times. The Great Depression didn't pass the Record by, but editor P.I. Lipsey, who served the newspaper from 1912-41, managed to keep the Record afloat.

During World War II, editor A.L. Goodrich, who served as editor from 1942-

56, regularly received notifications from the War Production Board that the allocation of newsprint for publishing the Record was being cut — often to insufficient levels.

Upon receiving the notifications, Goodrich would board the first train to Washington, D.C., and somehow return with enough newsprint allocation to keep the newspaper in circulation.

State Baptist papers have served a vital role throughout the years, calling Baptists to Kingdom work and trumpeting issues in which Baptists needed to get involved. Those traditions continue today.

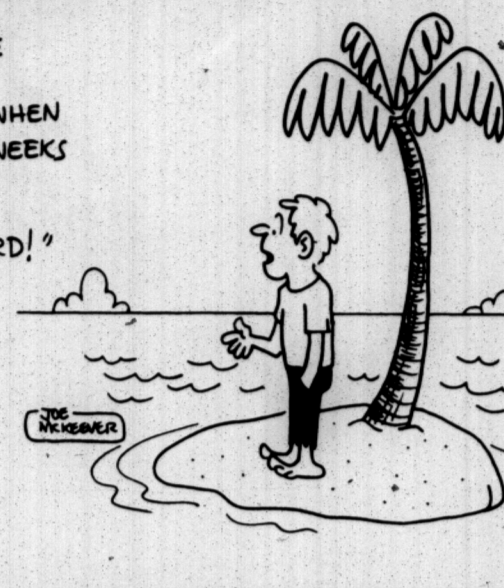
Keeping the cost of a subscription to The Baptist Record as affordable as possible has been a source of pride around here. The Record is currently the lowest-priced newspaper in the SBC, which means that the newspaper is able to reach a great many Baptist homes in Mississippi.

We work hard to keep it that way. In the ten years in which this writer has served as associate editor and editor, the price of a subscription to The Baptist Record has risen only once — and that was solely to make up for a large postage increase that the paper's budget couldn't absorb.

It's worth noting that this single increase in ten years went 100% to postage costs, and not to the production of the paper.

Now we find ourselves in a similar situation. As of July 1, the United States Postal Service is once again increasing postal rates by a large percentage. The increase is simply more than the newspaper's budget can absorb, so for only the second time in over ten years the price of The Baptist Record must rise to cover this postage increase.

"THE LAST TIME
I FELT THIS
ISOLATED WAS WHEN
I WENT TWO WEEKS
WITHOUT
READING MY
BAPTIST RECORD!"



The increase will be minimal — two cents per issue per subscriber, or a net increase of \$1 per year per subscriber.

For an individual subscriber, the cost will be \$9.35 per year. Under the discount subscription plans offered to Mississippi Baptist churches, the cost will continue to be less.

Even with the increase, The Baptist Record is still a bargain. The Baptist Standard currently charges \$13.50 for a one-year subscription. The Alabama Baptist charges \$12 for a one-year subscription. Only one other state Baptist newspaper charges less than \$10 for a one-year subscription (Arkansas, \$9.37), and that's for 26 issues per year compared to the Record's 50 issues per year.

We think you'll agree that the Record is a good buy worth placing in the hands of every Mississippi Baptist. In return for the continued loyalty of our faithful readers, we pledge to do our best to produce the highest quality newspaper possible at the lowest cost possible.

Now, let's dispense with the business talk and get back to the work our Lord left us to do!

GUEST OPINION:

Thank God for religious liberty

By Tommy Arinder, pastor
Immanuel Church, Cleveland



On every Fourth of July, the United States celebrates its birthday. On that day in 1776, representatives of the 13 colonies adopted an eloquent statement setting forth the reasons for declaring their independence from Great Britain. The first paragraph of the Declaration of Independence says:

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

Let us think together about several words mentioned in that momentous paragraph.

The first word is "political." This word is used often in our society today. While I was talking recently to an elected official, he made this

statement: "I was out politicking." I asked him what he meant by the word "politicking." He said, "I was asking a person to vote for me."

Politics is an important part of the American system of elections. Elections on the city, county, state, and national level determine who will be in office to make the laws, set tax structures, and appoint individuals to administrative and judicial positions. As a Christian citizen, your vote is important. We should urge all our Christian family and friends to vote.

The second word is "liberty." The apostle Paul writes in Gal. 5:1, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage."

Liberty is a discipline as well as a privilege.

Baptists have always been the champions of religious liberty, not for themselves alone but for all men. In America, Roger Williams established the Colony of Rhode Island with its charter calling for absolute religious liberty. As you and I worship God on June 30 in our churches, we sit and stand in religious liberty.

It is a day to collectively say, "Thank you God for our religious liberty."

The third word is "rights." As Christians we are citizens of two worlds. We are earthly and spiritual citizens with rights in both worlds. As citizens of heaven we are told to be obedient to the Lord Jesus.

Phil. 3:20 says, "For our citizenship is in heaven..." — and we are at the same time to be good citizens of the state because government itself is

ordained of God. Paul tells us in Rom. 13:1-2, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."

We are privileged to live in a country where our rights as citizens are guaranteed to us by the U.S. Constitution. As Christians we have the right to influence our country to practice Christian principles.

When our political and spiritual ancestors declared their independence they stated this moral-political belief, that all human beings are "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights." These rights are: "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

As Christian citizens we can be involved politically in our country. We can enjoy and practice our religious liberty — and we can exercise our rights and fulfill our responsibilities as America citizens.

Citizenship & Religious Liberty Sunday is June 30. Arinder is a trustee of the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission.

Musician enjoys return to Mississippi roots

By Vernon Sikes
Correspondent

Michael Passons, a six-year member of the Christian recording group Avalon, is looking forward to the group's July 8 performance in Yazoo City's First Church.

Not only will the Yazoo County native be returning home, but the other Avalon members always look forward to a little relaxation as they "crash" at his mother's house.

"I'm going to come in and stay awhile and visit, but the rest of the group will have to get back to family and other obligations," Passons, 36, said recently from his Nashville home. "They always like to come down just a little bit and ride four-wheelers and eat some Mississippi cooking."

As often as possible, the group visits the Passons' home.

"We all stay out there and everybody likes to just pile up inside the house. It's like camping out."

This summer is a little unusual for the Grammy-nominated vocal group in that their schedule is relatively light. The break follows Avalon's 10th tour, "Oxygen," and 200 appearances last year.

"This summer is a really light load for us this year," he explained. "It's usually not that way, so we're not doing a lot of travel this summer, which is good. We've all spent the last seven years on the road so much that when we get some

time off, we just want to spend it with our families.

"We're just taking some time off, resting and doing things normal people do..."

Passons said his time is pretty much occupied with a new puppy, a Jack Russell terrier, and house-training duties at home in Nashville.

probably would impact the group the most.

Passons defines contemporary Christian music as "pop music that just has a different message. The message is the Word of God, salvation, and Jesus Christ."

The audiences greatly determine how energetic and lively their performances go. The livelier the audience, the livelier the performers.

"If the audience is into it, we get even more energetic. If we think they're enjoying it, that makes it better for us."

He said the ideal audience is "one that looks like they want to be there, has a smile on their faces and we like to look out and see people mouthing the words and singing along with us. We like audiences who join us and don't just act as spectators."



Avalon featuring Michael Passons (second from left)

Prior to moving to Nashville to pursue a career in Christian music, Passons served on the music staff of First Church, Jackson, while attending Baptist-affiliated Mississippi College in Clinton.

Avalon was formed in December 1995 after their manager, Norman Miller, envisioned the formation of a Christian vocal group. As Miller searched for talent who might be interested in joining, Passons was the first to indicate an interest and the first to be placed in the group.

"That was in early 1995 and after that everybody else came in at different times," he said of the other members, Cherie Adams, Janna Long, and Jody McBrayer, all of whom recently have married.

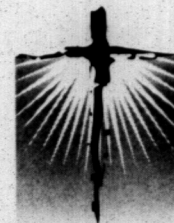
So far, none of the members has been blessed with children, which Passons said

The Yazoo City performance will be a little different in that the band, the special lighting, and the technical crew will be missing.

"It's going to be more acoustic. We're going to do a lot of stuff with the piano and more of just us. We want to make it just a little more intimate, so we're working on doing a different spin there."

Although Yazoo City's performance will take place in a church's sanctuary, Passons said he wants everyone to feel free to applaud and join in the fun of song.

The concert will begin at 7 p.m. on July 8. Tickets are \$8 in advance and \$10 at the door. Tickets may be purchased at the church office or by sending a self-addressed and stamped envelope plus the money for the desired tickets to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 780, Yazoo City, MS 39194.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

The Baptist Record

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Treat flags right

When Vacation Bible School (VBS) season and Independence Day on July 4 roll around every summer, the topic of flag etiquette comes to George Berger's mind.

"Most churches have the United States and Christian flags displayed in their sanctuaries, and there appears to be some confusion as to the correct display of flags," said the missions director for Lebanon Association in Hattiesburg.

A U.S. Army veteran, Berger likes to see the flags displayed properly.

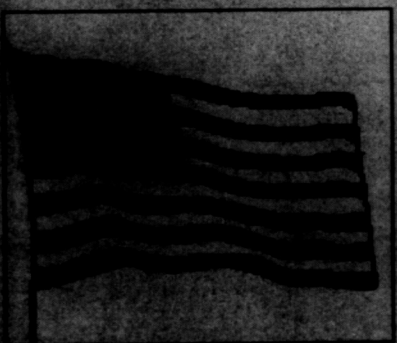
"Before 1976, our flag guides went into detail on the location of each flag depending on whether it is on the platform or not. In 1976, the U.S. Congress passed new rules of flag etiquette."

"The correct respect display of flags indoors is for the flag of the United States to be displayed to the right of the speaker and to the left of the congregation or audience. The Christian flag is to be to the left of the speaker and the right of the congregation," he explained.

Berger said he believes the church is one of the most important places to show respect for the flags, as reflected in their correct placement.

"As a veteran, I usually notice the flag display shortly after entering the sanctuary. I feel that churches need to be correct in setting this example," he said.

For more information on the proper treatment of flags, visit www.usflag.org



Looking back

10 years ago

Cooperative missions, long the hallmark of the Southern Baptist Convention, "doesn't exist any more," because of the heavy-handed missions strategy now employed by the SBC Foreign Mission Board, says Woman's Missionary Union retired missions leader Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler.

20 years ago

James Lee Young, 39, resigns as editor of the Colorado Baptists' Rocky Mountain Baptist newspaper, saying he can no longer function under the Colorado Baptist Convention Executive Board because of what he termed "censorship."

50 years ago

A letter to A. L. Goodrich, editor of The Baptist Record, states: "Anyone who believes that things would be worse with liquor legalized than it is now doesn't know much and should have his head examined. I am a total abstainer, and a Baptist."

Nominations deadline nearing

July 8 is the deadline for submitting nominations to fill trustee and board member positions on the commissions and boards of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

According to Aubrey Boone, chairman of the Committee on Nominations and a member of First Church, Winona, a limited number of vacancies will be filled on:

- Board of Ministerial Education
- Christian Action Commission
- Mississippi Baptist Foundation
- Education Commission
- Historical Commission
- Baptist Children's Village
- Baptist Health Systems, Inc. (Jackson)
- Baptist Memorial Health Care System, Inc. (Memphis)
- Blue Mountain College
- Mississippi College
- William Carey College
- Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB)

The Committee on Nominations will work in conjunction with the heads of institutions and agencies to bring a list of nominees to be approved by messengers to the 2002 annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention at First Church, Jackson, on October 29-30.

Nomination forms can be obtained by contacting the MBCB Executive Director's Office, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3201 or toll free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 201. E-mail: bbox@mbcb.org.

Enhanced security set for Baptist Building

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

New security procedures for the Baptist Building in downtown Jackson are designed to provide a high level of protection for the employees of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), while at the same time facilitating entry into the building for both individuals and large groups, reported one of the system's planners.

Barri A. Shirley, MBCB associate executive director for resource services, said beginning July 1, security locks will be activated for front and rear entry points into the Baptist Building.

An MBCB greeter and the building's security guard will monitor the entry points from the street-level lobby, Shirley said, and they will be responsible for granting access through the secured doors.

"An intercom system for requesting building access has also been installed (at the secured entry points). Every effort will be made to release the locks for employees and known guests before use of the intercom becomes necessary," he stressed.

Each building visitor will be asked to sign a guest register, note their arrival time, and announce the employee or department they are visiting, Shirley said.

The MBCB greeter will notify the employee or department that a guest

has arrived and verify that the guest is expected. The employee or department staffer can then direct the guest to come to the department or they can meet the guest in the lobby, Shirley said.

"Guests will also be asked to sign out as they leave the building," he added.

For large groups and meetings of 20 or more guests, Shirley said the department responsible for the meeting will be required to submit a list of attendees to speed up the sign-in process.

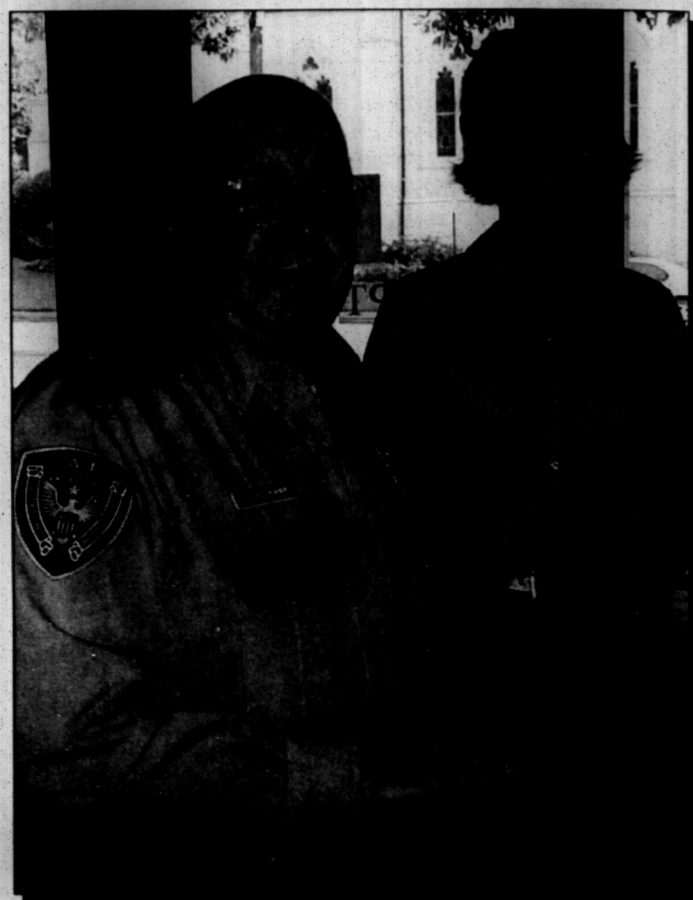
"As each person arrives, he/she will give their names and it will be checked off the list. They will not have to sign in individually," he said.

A representative of the responsible department will be on hand in the lobby to meet the guests, hand out packets or name tags if necessary, and direct guests to the meeting room, Shirley said.

"We anticipate that these actions will enhance the security of our employees while meeting the needs of our visitors.

"We want to thank all our visitors in advance for their cooperation in implementing this new security system," he added.

For more information on the new security procedures, Shirley can be contacted at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3240 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 240. E-mail: bshirley@mbcb.org



GETTING READY — Reviewing new security measures scheduled to go into effect July 1 at the Baptist Building in Jackson are security officer Chuck Gallagher (left) and greeter Jennifer Williams. The new security measures will include access control from the street-level building entrances and a sign-in/sign-out ledger. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

Velichkovski offers 'Testimony' to God's love

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

Darko Velichkovski grew up in a world without God. Born in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in 1963, he was raised to believe the Bible was a fairy tale, and that he was the sole master of his own destiny.

His story of how he came to Christ is now available on a new compact disc simply titled, *Testimony*.

Velichkovski shares the story of God's grace in his life, accompanying his own words with his artistry on the clarinet.

"Music can be mistaken for entertainment," Velichkovski says, "but a testimony always communicates."

Velichkovski recorded the CD because of the numerous requests he has had for his spoken testimony.

Velichkovski's story is well known among Mississippi Baptists and around the country — of how as a sophomore at the Music Conservatory of Belgrade University at the age of 16, he met an American tourist visiting Yugoslavia.

Experiencing an amazing series of providential circumstances Velichkovski — though the efforts of that tourist from Jackson — ultimately ended up at the Juilliard School of Music in New York City.

He has performed on many of the most prestigious concert stages around the world, worked as a music producer and production consultant, and served as the president and CEO of the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra in Jackson.

On the CD he shares of how God reached down through the Iron Curtain and changed his life forever. In June of 2000 he felt led to devote himself exclusively to Christian music ministry and evangelism.

In 1993, Velichkovski formed his own production company, Grace Productions Group. "Grace has two basic components, a for-profit and a not-for-profit component," Velichkovski stated. "What Grace really desires is to locate and promote artists who have strong testimonies for ministry.

"Our for-profit work includes pre-production, production, and post-production services, marketing, and other consulting. But we're excited about the possibilities of our non-profit work, giving artists the opportunity to reach others through their testimonies."

Velichkovski wants to offer an alternative to secular audiences, through which an artist can share their own story as well as their music.

"We want to pave the road for these artists, helping them develop their ministries. I won't go anywhere where I can't speak," he stated.

Velichkovski's ministry has given him opportunities to share his gifts on the clarinet and his compelling testimony all over the country.

Through the auspices of Grace Ministries, he wants to offer those same opportunities to other musicians and artists.

"I've learned to step out on faith," Velichkovski said. "I have to exercise supernatural courage, based on God's supernatural presence and strength."

Regarding Grace Production Group, he said, "There is a notion to build something that will outlast you. The music gets the attention, then you can speak the truth."

In addition to the new CD, Velichkovski has released two additional Christian albums: *I Surrender*, a collection of uniquely arranged hymns and contemporary Christian favorites; and *The Gift*, an album of Christmas worship and adoration.

For more information on Velichkovski's ministry, contact Grace LLC at (601) 991-9949. E-mail: info@gracellc.com; or on the World Wide Web at www.gracellc.com.



Velichkovski

CONTRACTION

I read an article recently about "contraction." It was actually a discussion about major league baseball going through contraction. I was not aware of what contraction was, so I read on into the article trying to figure out what in the world these folks were talking about. What I discovered was that major league baseball is discussing how to get rid of some of their clubs. Some major league baseball teams are not doing as well as others, so they are going to shut them down — supposedly. They call it contraction.

I began to understand what they are dealing with — major league baseball is shrinking. Rather than expansion and growth, it is contraction. Other folks refer to this practice as "down-sizing" or "management adjustments," and some folks see it as getting "laid-off" and still others see it as just simply getting "fired." According to the article, some major league teams have just shrunk up to nothing. They don't win games. The fans don't support them. The franchise loses money. Therefore, the league says, "Shut her down!" *Contraction!*

Part of the discussion in this article had to do with what you do with players, coaches, stadiums, vendors, and all the support businesses when you shut down or contract the league? There were no easy answers.

I began thinking about some



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

things in church life that may need contraction. There are those ministries that we have in place that we encourage and nurture. They serve us well and are winning programs, but in time they begin to wane in their effectiveness and become skeletons of the past, yet still we hold on to them. We may even look at them, discuss them, and ask how we would go about dispensing of the things related to the ministry. Like major league baseball, we come to the conclusion that this is not easy and there are no simple solutions.

We prefer, or at least I do, to think of the Kingdom of God, the church, and the Lord's business, in terms of expansion, growth, additions, and getting larger. I believe that is pretty much the way the Lord would like for us to go, even though, at times, God himself has implemented programs of contraction. Do you recall that downsizing event when the Lord came to Gideon and said, "We are going to have to reduce your army." Gideon had a great army and they were about to go to war against a strong army. I doubt

that it made much sense to Gideon when God called him in for a "down-sizing" conference, but the Lord knew three things:

- The army would be strengthened by the departure of some people.

- A lot of the people who were in Gideon's army would not help when help was needed.

- The Lord could do more through a handful of folks than the large number of folks could do on their own.

Gideon was about to learn some invaluable lessons concerning spiritual contraction. He was about to learn that the people who actually get the job done in the Lord's work are people who are committed totally through the whole experience. It is not the people who start and fall by the wayside, or the people who jump on the bandwagon as it roars down the street, but it is the faithful, undaunted band of saints. They are the ones who win the wars.

Another tremendous lesson Gideon was about to learn was related to the power of God. From an army of 33,000 men, down to 300, Gideon was about

to see what he *could not do*, God *could do*, and what God *wants to do* is to show us what he *will do* when we let him!

In the process of learning these important insights from the Lord, Gideon had to go through a reduction revelation as he saw not hundreds, but thousands, of his men walk away. The first wave left because they didn't want to be there in the first place. The second group that departed was smaller, but they were not prepared to make a contribution either. At that point, we see Gideon standing before the Lord with a small handful of men. I wonder if Gideon wanted to say to the Lord, "What have you done to me now?" As always, God knew what he was doing.

If we fully understood the inner workings of God, as time moves on we would recognize that every generation seems to live in that "push and pull" struggle of *quantity vs. quality*. I do believe that God wants us to reach all we can, wherever we can, but I am also aware that, like at the feeding of the five thousand, there were a lot more people who wanted to enjoy getting their stomachs filled than people who would share their lunch.

As we face today's issues, let us hear the call to battle, evaluate the risks involved in service, count our resources, and number our opposition. We, too, see contraction as some fall by the wayside. God help us to be one of the 300 or, if need be, just be ONE that he can use!

Postage hike leads to increase

Due to the large postal rate increases scheduled to go into effect July 1, it will become necessary to raise the price of The Baptist Record two cents per issue per subscription beginning with the first billing in July, according to Editor William H. Perkins Jr. The net effect will be an increase of \$1 annually per subscription.

Perkins stressed that the increase will go directly to postage costs and is not an increase in the base price of a subscription.

"We pledge to continue to make The Baptist Record the lowest-cost, highest-quality publication we can in pursuit of our mutual goal of helping to bring Mississippi and the world to Jesus," he said.

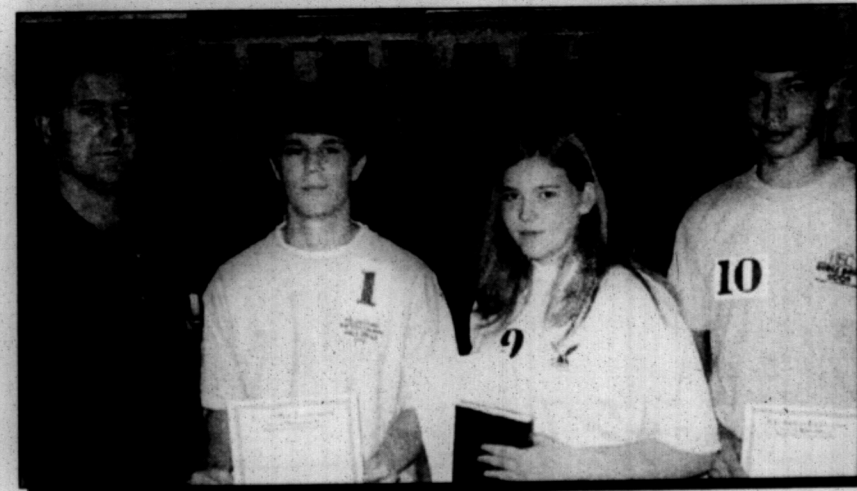
Bible Drill, Youth Speaker winners announced



YOUTH SPEAKERS TOURNAMENT PARTICIPANTS — (from left) — Lindsey Oswalt, 1st place winner, First Church, Clinton; Shanna Jones, 2nd place winner, Cherry Creek Church, Ecu; Jay Brandon, 3rd place, Highland Colony, Jackson; Stephanie Bishop, 4th place, Antioch Church, Union; Dustin Gentry, Williamsville, Kosciusko; and Hugh Fisher, First Church, Indianola. (Photo by Tony Martin)



SENIOR HIGH BIBLE DRILL SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS — (from left) Harvey Ellis, consultant, Discipleship & Family Ministry Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board; Ashely Mallette, 1st place, Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale; Angela Crawley, 2nd place, First Church, Jackson; and Brandi Brown, Pelahatchie Church, Pelahatchie. (Photo by Tony Martin)



JUNIOR HIGH BIBLE DRILL WINNERS — (left photo, from left) Harvey Ellis, consultant, Discipleship & Family Ministry Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board; Chris Burnham, 1st place, Pelahatchie Church, Pelahatchie; Bethany Ellis, 2nd place, Courtland Church, Courtland; and Drew Harper, 3rd place, Hebron Church, Meridian. (Photo by Tony Martin)



FRIENDS OF BIBLE DRILL — Each year, the Discipleship & Family Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) gives the Friends of Bible Drills

Award to the person or persons who best exemplify the spirit of Bible Drills in Mississippi. Charles Davis, (left photo, left) missions director for Pike Association in McComb, and his wife Betty (center), Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union president, were presented the 2002 award by Marcus Peagler, director, MBCB Discipleship & Family Ministry department. (Photo by Tony Martin)

NAMES IN THE NEWS

Spencer Sullivan received a Bible and a certificate of license from **Wade Chappell**, pastor of Grandview Church, Pearl, on April 7. Sullivan, a student at Mid-America Seminary in Memphis, is serving as youth minister at Highland Church, Senatobia. Pictured (from left) are Sullivan and Chappell.



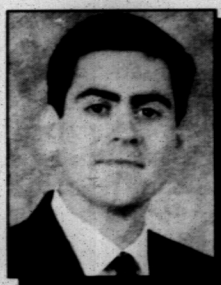
Sullivan and Chappell

Jerry and Sarah Talley will be honored with a retirement reception for their years of ministry at Oak Forest Church, Jackson, on June 30, from 3 to 5 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. For additional information, call (601) 372-2021.

Fred Eugene Wilson received an honorary doctor of divinity degree in evangelism from the New Wine School of the Bible in Tecumseh, Okla. The degree was conferred upon Wilson in recognition of his outstanding achievements in Christian ministry for more than 29 years. Wilson is senior pastor of Friendship Church.



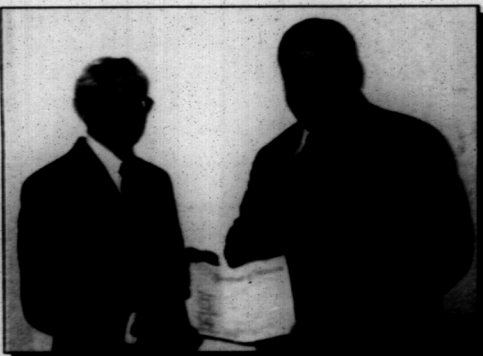
Wilson



Moore

Russell D. Moore of Biloxi, received a doctor of philosophy degree from Southern Seminary on May 17 during the 189th commencement. He presently serves as professor of Christian theology at Southern Seminary. He received his master of divinity degree from New Orleans Seminary in 1997 and his bachelor's degree from the University of Southern Mississippi in 1993.

Kelly Mitchell was ordained to the ministry on June 1 at Sallis Church, Attala County. He is serving as the interim pastor of McAdams Church, McAdams. Pictured (from left) are Thomas Wicker, pastor, and Mitchell.



Wicker and Mitchell



Coldwater Church VBS 1st & 2nd graders

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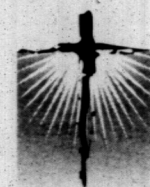


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Ludlow Church VBS participants

Vacation Bible School was held at Ludlow Church, Ludlow, June 3-7, with an enrollment of 91. Money collected will pay for two people to go to Maryland to teach Vacation Bible School. Wanda Babb was director. M. L. Wallace is pastor.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

An average of 95 children attended VBS each day at First Church, Coldwater. In a friendly competition the boys and girls gave 308 pounds of coins for their yearly missions offering. Total amount received was \$1,020.



Coldwater Church VBS 5th & 6th graders



Coldwater Church VBS Kindergarten class



Coldwater Church VBS 3rd & 4th graders



VBS participants of Chester Church, Ackerman

BAPTIST COLLEGE AND SEMINARY NEWS

Seven students with Mississippi ties received doctoral degrees from New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) during commencement exercises in May. Standing with President Charles S. Kelley, Jr., (center) is Sylvie Taconnet Raquel from Paris, France, now of Ripley, doctor of philosophy (far left); Joe Phillip Crout, Jackson, pastor of Lakeshore Church, doctor of ministry (middle left); David E. Sartin, Marks, pastor of Community Church, Columbus, doctor of ministry (left); James Robert Futral, Mississippi PhD. Graduates of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

Edwon Doye "Eddie" Campbell, Coldwater, instructor in English at Leavell College, NOBTS, doctor of philosophy (middle right); and Robert Lawrence Landry, St. Martin, regional director of children's services in Jackson and George counties for Singing River services in Gautier, doctor of philosophy (far right).

Learn event on July 22, 11:45 a.m.-12:45 p.m. This alumni event will provide an opportunity to meet MC's new president, Lee G. Royce. The program begins at noon. To make a reservation or for additional information, write P. O. Box 4027, Clinton, MS 39058, or call (601) 925-3208 by July 19.

The Office of Continuing Education at Mississippi College is offering Senior Adult Education Program beginning July 1. At \$50 per course, this program allows senior adults (age 55 or above) to register and attend selected academic courses (limited to lecture courses), listen, take notes, and experience the college environment while being exempt from tests, grades, and attendance requirements. A

course may be selected from the current class schedule of credit courses. For more information about the program or to view the class schedule, applicants may access the Mississippi College web site at www.mc.edu or call Michael Johnson at (601) 925-3264.

The eleventh annual Creativity Exploration will be held July 22-24 for second through sixth graders, and July 23-25 for seventh through twelfth graders, on the campus of William Carey College (WCC) in Hattiesburg.

The Creativity Exploration is designed to encourage students to develop creative talents through poetry, writing, art, and photography. The program will run daily from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Tuition for either age group is \$50 and includes all instructional materials, supplies, refreshments, and lunches.

For more information or an application, contact Read Diket at The Center for Creative Scholars, William Carey College, 498 Tuscan Avenue, Box 148, Hattiesburg, MS 39401. Telephone: (601) 318-6205. E-mail: rdiket@wmcarey.edu.



Mississippi PhD. Graduates of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

dren's services in Jackson and George counties for Singing River services in Gautier, doctor of philosophy (far right).

Mississippi College (MC) is hosting a tri-county Lunch and

attend selected academic courses (limited to lecture courses), listen, take notes, and experience the college environment while being exempt from tests, grades, and attendance requirements. A



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4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him. *(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)*

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STAFF CHANGES

Liberty Hill Church, Pope, Panola County, has called Ronald Long as pastor effective June 1. He previously served Mentor Church, Rogersville, Mo. Long received his associate of divinity degree from Southwestern Seminary.

HOMEcomings

Parkview, Leland: July 7; memorial service and note burning during the 10:30 a.m. service; followed with dinner and singing; Jerry File, former pastor, speaker.

First Church, Louise: June 30; dinner in the fellowship hall following morning service; singing in the afternoon with the Johnson Trio; Robert Ragland, former pastor; speaking; Luke Edwards, pastor.



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Magee's Creek, Jayess: July 14-18; Sunday, 11 a.m., covered dish dinner, and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Thurs., 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Charles Smith, Duncan, evangelist; Tim Morrison, Monticello, music.

Beulah, Magee: 100th anniversary; July 7-10; Sunday, 10 a.m. service with note burning ceremony; 11 a.m., revival service, and lunch at noon; Mon.-Wed., 7:30 p.m.; Bob Ivy, pastor.

McAdams, McAdams: July 7-10; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Kelly Mitchell, interim pastor.

Trinity, Philadelphia: July 8-10; James Young, Union, evangelist; Mark Lanier, Pineville, La., music.

Sunrise, Carthage: July 7-10; 7:30 p.m. nightly; David Michel, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, evangelist; Linn Bearden, Kosciusko, music; Frank Smith, pastor.

Calvary (Scott): June 30-July 3; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Don Savell, evangelist; Bobby Warren, music; Evelyn Sims, pianist; Martin Williams, pastor.

State Bible drill participants from **Navilla Church, McComb**, pictured (from left) are Jessica Boatwright, Codi Musselwhite, Austin Brown, Belinda Wright, and Magan Berry.



Bible drill team of Navilla Church, McComb

Greater Vision will be at **First Church, Fulton**, June 30 at 6 p.m. Tommy Winders is pastor. For additional information, call (662) 862-3207.

Bible drill team from **First Church, Hattiesburg**, pictured (from left) are Trey Collier, Cliff Mapp, and Harlan Mapp. The team made it all the way to state finals and passed. The leader of the team is Ann Mapp. Johnny H. Breazeale is pastor.



Bible drill team of First Church, McLaurin

Coronation for GAs and Acteens of **First Church, Senatobia**, was held on May 15. Emmy Jarjowa is director.

Patriotic service will be held at **Walthall Church, Walthall**, July 3 at 6 p.m. This service is sponsored by the senior adults of the Triple W Club. For additional information, call the church at (662) 258-3259.

Real Life Crusade, countywide, will be held at Magee High School, July 1-3 at 7:30 p.m. The evangelist will be Jim Wilson and Larry McFadden, music evangelist. For additional information, call Brent Barker at (601) 849-2245 or Havard McDonald at (601) 849-5776.



GAs and Acteens of First Church, Senatobia

Antioch Church, Columbus, will present Freedom Weekend with Special Services veterans and Vietnam war hero, Paul Longgrear, June 30, at 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Longgrear was one of 14 survivors of the North Vietnamese attack on Lang Vei. He will share his testimony and a life-changing message from the Word of God. **Mission: Possible 2002** will be held for teenagers 7th-12th grade, June 27-29. For additional information,

call the church at (662) 328-4189.

Vacation Bible School was held at **Dublin Church, Carson**, June 3-7 with 99 in attendance and one profession of faith. Hazel McPhail was director. Pat Nations is pastor.



Dublin Church VBS

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BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC/YOUTH: Hebron Baptist Church is looking for a bi-vocational minister of music/youth. Please send resume to: Hebron Baptist Church, 16 Hebron Church Road, Soso, MS 39480.

RURAL CHURCH located 25 miles north of Jackson, is seeking a part-time minister of music. Primary responsibilities will include music direction during mid-week rehearsals, regular church worship services, and special music/drama presentations during the year. Send resumes to: MUSIC COUNCIL, P.O. Box 67, Bentonia, MS 39040.

NORTHWEST BAPTIST ASSOCIATION is seeking a God-called man, seminary trained, to serve in the ministry of Program Development and Education for our association. All interested individuals need to address their inquiries to Rev. John L. Perkins, Association Missions Director, P.O. Box 381, Hernando, MS 38632.

HIGH HILL BAPTIST CHURCH, 10021 Road 206, Philadelphia, Miss., 39350, is seeking a bi-vocational minister of music for Sunday morning and night services. Send resume to the above address, ATTN: Music Committee.

SEEKING BI-VOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTER for Trinity Church at 595 Center Ave., Philadelphia, MS 39350.

Please send resume or e-mail: hilltrinity@hotmail.com.

BRIAR HILL BAPTIST CHURCH, Florence, MS, is seeking a God-called man for pastor. If you feel that God may be leading you, please contact the church office at (601) 845-6843, and we will send you a summary description of the church, after which you may submit a resume if you feel led to consider this place of service.

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HEBRON BAPTIST CHURCH, Sardis, Miss., is seeking a bivocational minister of music. Please send resume to Hebron Baptist Church, c/o Travis Tramel, 13919 Ballentine Road, Sardis, MS 38666, or call (662) 487-2684. Please leave message if no answer.

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FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

God Wants Me to be Kind

2 Kings 4:1-37

By Ruth V. Gamble

My earliest recollection of Sunday School was of seeing my teacher sitting with us in a circle, holding her open Bible on her lap, pointing to words on a page. Carefully pronouncing each word she told us, "God's word says, 'Be ye kind one to another.'" (Ephesians 4:32) Then we repeated it with her until we could say it "by heart." I believed with all my heart that she was telling me exactly what God said - something I must remember and do. Thank God for wonderful teachers who still plant seeds from God's Word in lives of children each Sunday! Surely much of the kindness we see today in adults is the fruit of the Spirit which has matured

from such early-planted seeds. Qualities of love, generosity, and gentleness began as God's word took root in the minds and hearts of little ones.

How do we identify, or define, kindness? It is a quality one possesses which is shown by actions. In the Old Testament this word is often translated as "lovingkindness" and is shown by God's mercy and forgiveness toward his people in spite of their sin and rebellion. In the New Testament the Greek word stresses the idea of usefulness, moral excellence, or goodness. It is best summed up in the word "grace," which pictures God's deliberate plan for salvation through Christ's sacrifice. Romans 2:4 speaks of "...the



Gamble

riches of his kindness, tolerance, and patience ... God's kindness [that] leads toward repentance."

The importance of relating to others with kindness is in two Old Testament stories about Elisha as he carried on the prophetic ministry after Elijah's passing.

Many of the miracles he performed were expressions of his willingness to help people. In one instance he caused a small amount of a widow's oil to be multiplied, enabling her to pay her dead husband's debts, saving her sons from being taken as slaves to work off the indebtedness. In another act of kindness he repaid a Shunamite couple's hospitality to him by announcing that they would have a son in their old age.

A secular worldview promotes selfish ambition, emphasizing that a person's strength or power should be used to control others, or to manipulate others for their own personal

benefit. This may be shown in self-centeredness, rudeness, greed, or demand of repayment for any act of so-called kindness. This worldview equates kindness with weakness, often inviting those who are ambitious or aggressive to take advantage of others.

The Christian worldview, however, recognizes that it is God who produces in believers this quality of kindness, making them considerate, attractive, and approachable. The Christian treats others as people of worth and expects nothing in return for kindness done or benevolent acts done out of love. Paul, in the well-known "Love Chapter," remarks that "love is kind" (1 Corinthians 13:4). Certainly God expects believers to be kind and to express this quality in our daily relationships.

It is interesting to note that there were times when Elisha could be straightforward and stern in his dealings with people. The story of the youth who taunted him, jeering and saying, "Go on up, you baldhead"

pictures Elisha calling down a curse on the young men for their irreverent disregard for God's prophet (2 Kings 2:23-25). A kind and gentle spirit does not necessarily indicate spinelessness or lack of courage. Rather, we should realize that kindness is strength applied appropriately. In the majority of Elisha's miracles we see his kind and thoughtful nature expressed as he often asked, "How can I help you?" or "Now what can be done for you?" His miracles were evidence of God's Spirit and power working in the lives of those he helped. He was aware of other's needs, and of their kindness to him, and he was persistent in desiring to repay kindness with no expectation of reward.

As followers of Christ who desire to imitate him and bring others to faith in him, we are expected to demonstrate this love, which is kind.

Gamble is a member of Slayden Church, Holly Springs.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Practicing Kindness

2 Samuel 8:1-10:1

By Bart Walker

While we are familiar with the term "grace," we may not be familiar with the wonder of its meaning. Our lesson begins with David "Using Power Properly" as he continues the expansion of his kingdom, fulfilling God's command to inhabit the land promised to Abraham and his descendants. We see David subduing the Philistines to the west, the Moabites to the east and the kingdom of Hadadezer (aided by the Arameans) to the north. We must note that it was not David who brought victory to Israel. Rather, David's success is rooted in the twice-spoken phrase, "and the Lord helped David wherever he went."

David's response to his growing greatness and the solidification of his reign is found in two pointed statements, one spoken about David, and the other spoken

by David. The first, spoken about David, tells of his use of power in his reign. 2 Samuel 8:15 records that "David reigned over all Israel and David administered justice and righteousness for all his people."

The second indication of David's response to his greatness is found in a statement that proceeded from his own lips. In 2 Samuel 9:1, 3 and 7 David announces that it is his desire to act in a way different from traditional conquerors. He desires to show grace and kindness rather than annihilation to the family of the preceding king.

When David came to power, the family of Saul that remained alive went into hiding, expecting to be put to death. David surprises all involved by offering to show "kindness" to those who remain from the household of Saul.



Walker

We should note a little history at this point. On at least three occasions prior to the deaths of Saul and Jonathan, David swore to preserve the house of Saul and Jonathan. We may look back to 1 Samuel 20:13-14, 20:16-17 and 24:20-22. In each of these places David swears to either

Saul or Jonathan to preserve the household of the king by showing "kindness" to the descendants of Saul.

Planning Graciously - David, looking back at this history and the oaths sworn to Jonathan and Saul, now seeks to fulfill his promises. He now has the political clout to honor the oaths. The word "kindness" is translated from the Hebrew word "chesed". This is the word used to describe God's love for his people, an unmeasured, undeserved, boundless love. David reflects this love that he has experienced and conveys it to the family of Saul in the person of Mephibosheth.

I believe that we can see Mephibosheth in a journey that

obviously parallels the journey of mankind from sin to salvation. I have employed a simple alliteration to help us remember the flow of events.

Acting Generously - We begin with Mephibosheth's fear of the king. In the transfer of power, usually all of the former king's relatives were killed. In fear, after hearing news of the death of Saul, the nurse of Mephibosheth grabbed him up and began to run with him. During this attempted escape, Mephibosheth falls while fleeing the king. His injury is a life-long crippling in both of his feet. Upon David's pronouncement of the offer of grace, we see Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, revealing Saul's descendant's whereabouts.

When Mephibosheth arrives at the palace of David, we see him at the feet of the king. In fear, dreading death, Mephibosheth falls prostrate before David. As Mephibosheth cringes at the feet of the king in fear, he now experiences the gracious face of the king. David, in compassionate grace, looks directly into the face of the now standing Mephibosheth (see verse 8) and

says, "do not fear, for I will surely show kindness to you for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul; and you shall eat at my table regularly." Mephibosheth moves from the fear of the king, to falling while fleeing the king, to the feet of the king, to the face of the king, to now standing in the favor of the king! There is one last stop in Mephibosheth's journey. He gets to continually eat the food of the king. This is more than dinner; it is fellowship. The lame, whose feet are hidden beneath the gracious table of the king, now sits as a son of the king!

Is there a more pointed illustration by which we can teach the grace of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament? May this lesson give you the opportunity to convey the truth of God's gracious offer of salvation to those who in fear have fled and fallen, only to be brought to the feet of the king to find in his gracious face the favor of sitting in fellowship and eating the food at his table, forever!

Walker is pastor of Parkway Church, Natchez.

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FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

God Wants Me to do What is Right

2 Kings 22:1 - 23:30

By Ruth V. Gamble

This week's lesson pictures Judah's "boy-king," Josiah, who became king at the age of eight and ruled for 31 years. 2 Kings 22 tells us in verse two that "He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and walked in all the ways of his father David, not turning aside to either the right or to the left." (2 Kings 23:25) It is remarkable that both his father, Amon, and grandfather, Manasseh, were two of the most wicked kings Judah ever had. What/who influenced him to such godly ways? I cannot imagine an eight-year-old boy as mayor, senator, or CEO of a large corporation - much less a king! Picture Josiah as king of Judah when only eight years old!



Gamble

Someone had instilled in this youngster's heart a love and respect for God. Was it his mother Jedidah's teachings and godly influence or that of some unknown advisor or mentor who planted in this boy's heart a desire to know and serve God?

2 Chronicles 34 gives us more details about Josiah adding, "In the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young (only 16!), he began to seek the God of his father David. In his twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of high places ... carved idols and cast images ... Baals were torn down; he cut to pieces the incense altars ... and smashed the idols and images ... he purged Judah and

Jerusalem." Later he gave instructions for money to be entrusted to responsible workers for the Temple to be repaired. We are told that the men did their work faithfully. While this repair work was being done Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law and gave it to Shaphan the secretary. Shaphan read the book to Josiah. When Josiah heard the words of the Law he immediately realized the seriousness of the message and instructed Hilkiah to "inquire of the Lord for me and for the remnant in Israel and Judah." He said, "Great is the Lord's anger that is poured out on us because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord; they have not acted in accordance with all that is written in this book." There followed a time of confession, repentance, and a renewing of the Covenant as the Word was read to the people. Finally the Passover was observed. 2

Chronicles 35:18 concludes, that "The Passover had not been observed like this in Israel since the days of the prophet Samuel; and none of the kings of Israel had ever celebrated such a Passover as did Josiah."

Certainly Josiah is a model of goodness, the result of a right relationship with God. 2 Kings 23:25 summarizes Josiah's rule by saying, "Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the Lord as he did - with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his strength, in accordance with the Law of Moses."

God wants us to do what is right, but how can we know what is right? It is the result of having a right relationship with God. The words "good" and "goodness" do not occur in the story of Josiah, but the account strongly conveys the idea that his actions and character were those of a good - a godly - king.

The secular worldview usually pictures goodness as abid-

ing by rules, doing nice things for some people, and avoiding certain other people and activities. It places great importance on pleasing others and avoiding conflicts or unpleasantness. It may even mean only the absence of that which is "bad."

The biblical worldview, however, begins with the belief that God's Spirit in us produces goodness. In Mark 5:17-18 a rich young ruler addressed Jesus as "Good teacher." Jesus answered, "Why do you call me good? ... No one is good - except God alone." Goodness is God's nature and his Spirit in us produces goodness. Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary says goodness is "praiseworthy character; moral excellence ... God's goodness consists of righteousness, holiness, justice, kindness, grace, mercy, and love." These are the characteristics which should be evident in our lives as we become the people God wants us to be.

Gamble is a member of Slayden Church, Holly Springs.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Sexual Immorality

2 Samuel 11:1-12:31

By Bart Walker

Jesus taught, "Blessed are the merciful; for they shall receive mercy." Few stories exist in the Old Testament that more aptly display the relationship between being a giver of mercy and the necessity of receiving mercy than the contrast of last week's lesson on Mephibosheth and this week's lesson on David, Bathsheba, and Uriah.

Steps to Sin - Our lesson begins with a simple observation... "Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle... But David stayed home." When we are not employing our giftedness to the tasks God has given us, Satan is surely ready to occupy our time in another way.

And so it was with David. Kings and warriors are at battle, but he is at home, in Jerusalem, in bed during the

day, and wandering the high walls of his house at bedtime. He ought to be resting from a full day's labor or warring against the enemies of God, but is found allowing himself to catch more than a casual glance at a woman.

David's sin was not rooted in ignorance... he saw her, desired her, and inquired about her and found immediately that she was Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah. After his inquiry and the definite answer of her marital status, David continues in his pursuit, unhindered by the news that she was married.

David has messengers bring Bathsheba to his palace where the darkness of adultery stains the present and future of David's family life. Almost methodically the writer records... "he took her... she came to him... he lay with her."



Walker

In one simple verse so much of the future is irreparably changed!

A wise pastor told me once (I am sure this was not original to him, but he passed it on to me): "Sin will always take you further than you wanted to go, keep you longer than you wanted to stay, and cost you more than you wanted to pay." Had

David seen the distance, time, and price involved in this act, perhaps he would have chosen differently!

In the next verse, Bathsheba tells David: "I am pregnant." David uses his tactical, God-given intellect to begin a slippery slide into the world of deceptive cover-ups. He knows that he can simply bring Uriah home, have him sleep with Bathsheba and all will be well eight months later when a child is born (1 month premature, but who would be counting?) to a great warrior and his wife.

The greatest irony in the whole story of David's plunge into sin is the contrast of character between Uriah and David at this point. Prior to this time,

David served to be the godly contrast to the wicked character of those around him. Uriah, faithful servant, warrior and husband, lays himself at the door of David's house with the servants when encouraged to go home and be with his wife. When David confronted Uriah concerning Uriah's unwillingness to go to his own house, Uriah replies, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in temporary shelters, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field. Shall I then go to my house to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? By your life and the life of your soul, I will not do this thing." Ironically, this is similar to the phrase David used when he wanted to build a house for God!

Even in a state of king-inflicted drunkenness, Uriah refuses to go to his wife and sleep with her. David's cover-up now has to move to another level... elimination of the evidence. So David orchestrates the death of the loyal and faithful servant Uriah in a planned tactical military blunder. This frees David to take Bathsheba and cover the evi-

dence...with one exception.

Nathan brings confrontation to David in the form of a parable that infuriates David and causes him to swear judgment to the villain of the parable, to which Nathan replies - You are the villain of the story!

God's rebuke and judgment to David is fourfold. The sword will never depart from his family. God will raise up evil against David from within his own household. God will bring David's judgment in a public manner. The child that is to be born to him will die.

The Scriptures teach us, "To whom much is given, much will be required." We know few who gave more than David, nor had as much required!

What about each of us? Will sin wreck and ruin our lives and families as well? Though we know the wonders of God's grace and forgiveness given to David as well as offered to us in Jesus, let us strive to keep in mind Romans 6:1: "Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase... may it never be!"

Walker is pastor of Parkway Church

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats,



no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 588, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbc.org

PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES



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ALCOHOL: DYING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

On July 1, 2002, the state of Mississippi lowers the threshold for drunken driver arrests from 0.10 blood alcohol content to 0.08.

Governor Ronnie Musgrove, in signing the new law, stated, "The people of Mississippi want safer roads." Lieutenant Governor Amy Tuck said, "Mississippi ranks Number 1 for alcohol-related deaths per capita, and there is an annual state loss of \$2.3 million for alcohol-related deaths. That is too many lives and too much money."



Porter

Before Mississippi bows to the applause of the other states that have already passed such legislation, we must reflect on a couple of things. First, this bill was fiercely opposed and barely made it to the full House of Representatives. Secondly, the fear of losing federal highway dollars provided more incentive for passage than the number of lives that would be saved with the lower limit.

While thankful for this new law, I question whether it is enough and does it say what really needs to be said. Are we sending mixed signals to the youth of America? We live in an accommodating culture that says, "Alcohol consumption is okay as long as you control it." Our youth are taught "if you drink, don't drive," or better yet, "have a designated driver." The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) states in one of its publications, "For most people who drink, alcohol is a pleasant accompaniment to social activities. Moderate alcohol use-up to two drinks per day for men and one drink per day for women and older people-is not harmful for most adults."

The leader of a prominent organization that battles diligently to remove drunk drivers from our highways recently stated that they were

not against alcohol advertisements, but there needed to be certain standards established. Meantime, the Department of Transportation's preliminary 2001 traffic death statistics reveal virtually no change in alcohol-related deaths from 2000.

Recent events in our state indicate we have much work to do. In March, 2002, authorities raided a "rave party" on the Gulf Coast and discovered 70 to 100 drunken or impaired juveniles, most of them prepared to drive their vehicles home after the party. On April 18, 2002, the *Clarion Ledger*, Jackson, Mississippi, ran a story titled, "Alcohol found on school prom bus." Authorities searched a chartered bus as it arrived for the school prom.



After the first teen staggered off the bus, authorities found bottles of bourbon, vodka, champagne, and beer. A 21-year-old was arrested and charged with contributing to the delinquency of a minor. Mississippi has problems!!

Nationally we have problems with alcohol on our college campuses. Here are a few of the consequences of excessive underage

drinking that occur each year.

- 1,400 college students die from alcohol-related unintentional injuries, including motor vehicle crashes.
- 500,000 students are injured each year.
- 600,000 are assaulted by another student who also has been drinking.



- 70,000 students are victims of alcohol-related sexual assault or date rape.

- 1.2 to 1.5% of students attempted suicide resulting from drinking and drug abuse.

--- NIAAA

Do we have a problem? Maybe we should ask do I have a problem or does someone close to me have a drinking problem? Answering the following four questions can help you find out:

- Have you ever felt you should cut down on your drinking?

- Have people annoyed you by criticizing your drinking?

- Have you ever felt bad or guilty about your drinking?

- Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or get rid of a hangover?

One "yes" answer suggests a possible alcohol problem. Two or more "yes" answers indicate that it is highly likely that a problem exists. (NIAAA)

It is evident that "driving under the influence" kills but so does "living under the influence." Alcohol destroys marriages, relationships, hopes, dreams, and self-respect. We must continue to work for stricter laws. It is no longer enough to just keep the drunks out of the cars; we must find a way to keep the kids out of the bars. When will we realize that alcohol cannot be domesticated like some wild animal? Instead of saying, "If you drink, don't drive," we need to be saying, "Don't drink."

As a result of September 11, 2001, when approximately 3,000 innocent victims died, our nation declared war on terrorism. In 2001, 16,652 people died on our nation's highways due to alcohol-related accidents, and Congress seems oblivious to this fact. As a nation we continue to raise our alcohol filled glasses and toast the American way of life. A way of life that is killing us.

Can one be too critical or too radical in their distaste for alcohol and the alcohol industry? After pastoring a church for 37 years and seeing the devastating effects of alcohol, I think not. When you wake a family at 2 a.m. to tell them their child is not coming home because of an alcohol-related accident; when you look into the bruised face and hurting eyes of a young woman beaten by an intoxicated



husband; when you know a young mother spends a sleepless night weeping because her children went to bed crying for their father who has been on a drinking binge for several days; nothing seems too critical or too harsh. Should our message not be, "Don't drive under the influence nor live under the influence." We are living, driving, and dying under the influence of alcohol.

If you are interested in receiving Christian Action updates via the internet and will share this information with friends and your church, please e-mail us at rwood@mbcb.org. Include your name, address, phone number, and church name.

Texas Baptist teens killed in bus accident

KAUFMAN, Texas (BP) — At least five people are dead and 35 were injured when a church bus packed with teenagers crashed on Interstate 20 about 30 miles north of Dallas June 24.

The chartered bus was carrying 40 teenagers along with counselors destined for a church youth camp in Ruston, La. The students on the bus were from Metro Church in Garland, Texas. Metro Church is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

According to Trooper Rob White of the Texas Department of Public Safety, "From preliminary reports [the bus] began to weave for some unknown reason and struck a concrete pillar."

White told CNN there were no skid marks and no indications that the bus driver attempted to stop.

Eight helicopters were dispatched to the scene to evacuate the most seriously injured. Survivors were transferred to the First Church in Canton, Texas.

The bus was traveling east at 9:15 a.m. when it hit a bridge pillar over the highway near

the Van Zandt County line, authorities said.

The impact peeled back the metal from the side of the bus.

SBC President Jack Graham, elected to his first term last week at the SBC annual meeting in St. Louis, told Baptist Press the hearts and prayers of all Southern Baptists "go out to the families of the victims and those who are injured."

Graham is pastor of Prestonwood Church in the Dallas suburb of Plano.

"This is the time of year that thousands of our teenagers are on the highways traveling to mission destinations and camps," Graham said. "It reminds us of our need to constantly pray for one another and to pray for



TRAGIC CLEANUP — Rescue workers and state troopers work the scene where a bus carrying Baptist youths to a church camp in Louisiana crashed into a bridge support on Interstate 20 in east Texas on June 24, killing at least five people including the driver. The youths were from Metro Church in the Dallas suburb of Garland. (BP photo courtesy of The Dallas Morning News, Michael Ainsworth)

our teenagers as they travel."

"We know that God is sovereign," Graham added. "His comfort and the promises of God's Word will be very real to

the families. We look forward to ministering to these families any way we can and joining hearts and hands to hold them up before the Father in Heaven."

Bibliocipher

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GXS EA PGWS IXOZ
OEAC, WO WP XZO TZH
KZI OZ BXZM OEA
OWCAP ZH OEA
PAGPZXP, MEWDE OEA
TGEOAH EGOE LIO WX
EWP ZMX LZMAH.
GDOP ZXA: PANA

Clue: O=T

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John Twenty: Twenty-Nine.

Disaster relief units roll in as Baptists flee fire

HOLBROOK, Ariz. (BP and local reports) — Southern Baptist Disaster Relief kitchen and childcare units from California and Texas have joined the response to the worst wildfire in Arizona's history — a 330,000-acre inferno in East Central Arizona.

The fire currently eclipses in federal priorities even the ongoing Colorado wildfires, which continue to occupy Southern Baptist mobile kitchen units from Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. In a

third response of Southern Baptist Disaster Relief forces recently requiring a multi-state response, flooding in Minnesota has brought new assistance from volunteers in Missouri and Indiana.

The Men's Ministry department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board reported June 25 that no Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief units had been activated or notified to stand by for activation.

In the Arizona response, a mobile kitchen unit from

Sacramento, Calif., was the first to arrive, reaching Holbrook about 1:30 a.m. June 24. The unit was scheduled to begin preparing two meals daily beginning June 25 for distribution by American Red Cross vehicles, according to Chuck Erikson of Garden Grove, Calif., who is supervising the unit. The meals will support firefighters and other emergency workers, as well as evacuated residents staying in shelters.

A second mobile kitchen from Odessa, Texas, and a child care unit from Texas both were enroute to Eagar, Ariz., according to Joel Phillips, a North American Mission Board staff member serving as off-site coordinator for all of the responses.

In Colorado, the huge Hayman fire south of Denver was 67% contained as of June 24, according to news reports, but other fires continued to grow.

Texas and Oklahoma mobile kitchens continue to serve emergency workers and displaced residents from

the Hayman fire in Castle Rock and Memorial. An Arkansas unit began serving meals over the weekend in Durango, where a Missionary Ridge blaze was only 30% contained and encroaching more populated areas closer to the town.

In Minnesota, volunteers from Missouri began staffing a Minnesota mobile kitchen unit operating in Roseau County, Mo., over the weekend. The unit had been operating since June 13.

"They've done an outstanding job coming in and working with us, and teaching us a little bit," state disaster relief coordinator Phil Smith said of the Missouri volunteers. "It's been a great partnership between Minnesota and Missouri."

Missouri volunteers also are assisting with two child-care facilities set up near American Red Cross and Federal Emergency Management Agency assistance centers, Smith said. A "mud-out" unit from Indiana, meanwhile, arrived over the weekend to begin cleaning up homes damaged by the floods.

Over 4,000 Southern Baptists joined the exodus of 30,000 evacuees fleeing the Arizona fire. Authorities report that at least 186 homes have been consumed by the fire, including 116 in towns west of Show Low. A Southern Baptist church in Overgaard, Ariz. was reportedly lost in the fire, according to Matt Gaston, director of evangelism and missions for the Desert Pines Association.

The fire has already ripped through a number of small mountain towns.

